

H.D. SETTLEMENT REPORT

SHAHPUR DIST.

1894.

No. 650.

FROM

R. SYKES, ESQUIRE,

*Offg. Senior Secretary to Financial Commissioner,
Punjab,*

TO

J. M. DOUIE, ESQUIRE,

Offg. Rev. Secretary to Government, Punjab.

Dated LAHORE, the 30th October 1894.

SIR,

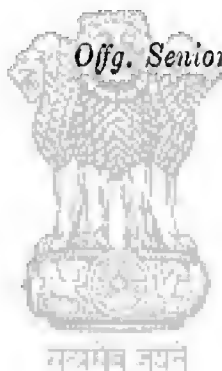
I am directed to submit Mr. Wilson's final Settlement Report of the Shahpur District, together with the remarks of the Commissioner, and a copy of the Financial Commissioner's Review thereon.

A map is attached to the report.

I have, &c.,

R. SYKES,

Offg. Senior Secy. to Finl. Commr., Punjab.



Financial Commissioner's Review of the Final Report of the Revised Settlement of the Shahpur District.

1. The revised settlement of the Shahpur district was commenced in April 1887 under the orders of Mr. J. Wilson as Settlement Collector, and was completed in April 1894. From April 1887 to November 1893 Mr. Wilson held charge of the district as Deputy Commissioner, in addition to the charge of the settlement, with the exception of periods of leave which aggregated about one year. The previous settlements of the district were—

Introductory.

1.—A summary settlement made in 1849 by Messrs. Cocks and Bowring.

2.—A regular settlement which was commenced in 1854 by Mr. Ouseley and completed in 1866 by Captain Davies. The term of the regular settlement expired in 1881, but the revised settlement was not undertaken till six years later.

2. The description of the Shahpur district, given by Mr. Wilson in Chapter I of his report and by the Commissioner in para. 1 of his Review, is very full. According to the recent re-measurements the total area of the district is 4,737 square miles. In point of size Shahpur comes thirteenth amongst the districts of the Punjab. The district is situated on the rivers Chenáb and Jhelum. The river Chenáb forms the south-eastern boundary of the district for 25 miles, whilst the river Jhelum intersects it, the Khusháb tahsíl lying to the west of the river and the Bhera and Shahpur tahsíls to the east of it. The highlands between the Chenáb and Jhelum rivers are called the Bár, which is a tract of good soil, in which, owing to the depth of the water from the surface, there is little cultivation, though there is abundant grazing after rain. To the west of the district and north of the river Jhelum is a high sandy and arid tract called the Thal. To the north of this again and south of the salt range is a region called Mohár. In this tract there is cultivation in years of fairly good rainfall, by means of embankments which intercept the drainage of the hills. The average rainfall of the district is about 15 inches, of which 11 fall in the summer and 4 in the winter months. The rainfall is, however, very variable. Less than a fourth of the total area is cultivated. The increase of cultivation since the regular settlement has been in the Bhera tahsíl 131, in the Shahpur tahsíl 179, and in the Khusháb tahsíl 89 per cent. This phenomenal increase of cultivation is ascribed in the Bhera and Shahpur tahsíls to the extension of inundation canals.

Descriptive.

3. There are now 87,654 acres of canal irrigated land in the district as against 2,192 acres at the regular settlement. The first canal was made in 1860 by the (then) Deputy Commissioner, Mr. (now Sir Donald) Macnabb. There are now four State and sixteen private canals. In paras. 15 to 18 of his report, Mr. Wilson gives an interesting account of these canals. The State canals, after repaying the capital and interest charges incurred upon them, and after deducting their working expenses, have brought to the State a clear profit of Rs. 53,901 in twenty-three years; of the Provincial canals, the Ráníwah has brought a clear profit of Rs. 3,80,000 in twenty-three years, whilst the Corbynwah canal brings in a net profit of Rs. 940 per annum. There are 16 private canals. There is no doubt that the State should keep the construction of canals in the Shahpur district in its own hands, and the Financial Commissioner is quite of the opinion which Mr. Wilson has expressed in a separate report, that the construction of Inundation canals in the Shahpur district should be pushed on where it can be shown that these canals will prove remunerative. Mr. Wilson is in favour of Inundation as against Perennial canals. This is a question which is open to argument, and the Financial Commissioner is not inclined to enter upon its discussion here.

Canals.

4. Forty-two per cent. of the whole area cropped is under wheat, 18 per cent. under bájra, and 6 per cent. under cotton. The area under all crops, except sugarcane and tobacco, has increased. The prices considered were for three periods—

Fifteen years	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1850-1864
Thirteen years	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1865-1877
Ten years	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1878-1887

The first period represents the prices of last settlement and covers the period during which settlement operations were in force, whilst the last period represents the prices now prevailing. After making allowances for distance from market and for village, as compared with town prices, the prices assumed for settlement purposes were—

	<i>Seers per rupee.</i>								
Wheat	25
Bájra	30
Jawár	35
Grain	35
Barley	40
Tarámíra	35
Gúr	15
Cotton (uncleaned)	15
China	45
Gúr	2

Comparing these prices with those in force for the six years since 1887, it is shown that they were, as His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor said in his Review of the assessment report of the Khusháb tahsíl, low when framed, and even after a consideration of the unusually low prices current in 1894, which are given by the Commissioner in para. 9 of his Review, the Financial Commissioner sees no reason to apprehend that the prices assumed are in any way too high, and if the low prices of 1894 were eliminated they are, perhaps somewhat low, especially as in view of the improvement in communications mentioned in para. 21 of the report. Export and import are now very much facilitated by improved communications due to the extension of Railways and to the opening out of the district by roads. It should also be recollected that as mentioned by the Commissioner, the cropped area in a year of low prices is usually larger than the cropped area in the year for which the produce estimate was framed, if that was an average year.

5. The Shahpur district is one in which large numbers of cattle are kept. The total annual income from this head is estimated at 4 lakhs of rupees. Population has increased by two-thirds since the regular settlement, but cultivation has increased so much more rapidly that the density of population per square mile of cultivation is less than it was before, the average area under cultivation per proprietor having risen from 9 to 13 acres. At the regular settlement the total number of tenants was 21,335, of whom 4,565 were occupancy tenants. In 1893 there were 60,537 tenant-holdings, of which 4,315 were held with rights of occupancy. Only 10 per cent. of the tenants-at-will pay in cash. Notwithstanding this great increase in prosperity the alienation of land by sale and mortgage has also increased. The causes of these transfers are given in para. 27 of the report. The pressure of the land revenue is not amongst them, and, in Mr. Fryer's opinion, there is no doubt that the chief cause is the improvidence of the people and the rise in the value of land which makes the money-lender eager to secure it. Where the cause of the transfer is that a land-owner has more land than he can himself cultivate, the transfer is not to be regretted. The only sure way to prevent the alienation of land by a body of peasant proprietors is, the Financial Commissioner thinks, to take away the power of making permanent alienations from the proprietors.

6. The assessment circles fixed at the regular settlement have not been altered, except that the Hithár and Nakka circles have been thrown together, and so have the Danda and Mohár circles. The classes of soil fixed were in the Chaj Doáb.

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| (1.) Cháhi. | | (3.) Sailáb. |
| (2.) Nahri. | | (4.) Búrání. |

In the Mohár circle the cultivated land was divided into three classes:—

- (1) Náládár, or land irrigated by torrents.
- (2) Rarídár, or land irrigated by surface drainage.
- (3) Báráni, land dependent on local rainfall only.

In the Hill circles there are two distinctive classes of soil—

- (1) Hail—Land surrounded by embankments to intercept the water of hill torrents.
- (2) Maira—Land which receives the surplus water from the hail or surface drainage only.

7. The proportion of the cultivated area held by tenants paying rents in cash being only 3 per cent., whilst 35 per cent. is the proportion held by tenants paying rent in kind; the chief basis for the assessment calculations was the estimated money-value of the rent in kind paid by tenants. The factors of this calculation were naturally—

- (1) The average price at which the produce can be sold.
- (2) The area actually harvested on an average of years.
- (3) The average outturn per acre for each kind of crop.
- (4) The share of gross produce which actually reaches the landlord.

Mr. Wilson says the prices he assumed might safely have been higher, but this, as has been said in para. 4 of this review, is somewhat doubtful. The area actually harvested tends to increase year by year even after allowing for the fact that the tendency of the patwáris is to understate the area of crops that have failed. The increased area harvested tends to correct any error that may have been made by over-estimating prices. The third factor in the calculation is the weakest, as it is difficult to estimate accurately the outturn per acre. Still a fairly good estimate is generally possible, and Mr. Wilson's estimate is, the Financial Commissioner considers, quite near enough for all practical purposes. The last factor is the share of the gross produce which reaches the landlord, and this seems to have been calculated with a liberal allowance for all the deductions which have to be considered, and with due consideration, too, for all the landlord's receipts, including straw and the profits from uncultivated land. Another estimate is that which is obtained by applying to the present cultivated area the revenue rates of the former settlement corrected by the rise in prices. This rise in prices is shown in para. 51 of the report to be something like 80 per cent., but the Settlement Collector took it at only 40 per cent., because he thinks that in the present measurements a larger area of fallow was included in the cultivated area than was the case at the regular settlement, and because the quality of the land newly brought under cultivation is probably inferior to the quality of the land previously under cultivation. Even on this computation the estimate founded on the old revenue rates exceeds the half net assets estimate. Finally, it was decided to fix the actual assessment at four-fifths of the half net assets estimate and defer a portion of the enhanced demand for five years. The general result is that the assessment, as it now stands, is Rs. 5,94,052 or 38 per cent. more than the assessment of the last year before revision, or 46 per cent. more if the water advantage revenue is included. The final assessment will be Rs. 6,44,864, or 49·29 per cent. more than the assessments of the year before revision when the deferred assessments fall in. Including water advantage revenue, the final assessment will be Rs. 6,73,064 or 56·98 per cent. more than the revenue of the last year before revision. The Financial Commissioner's forecast of the increased revenue to be obtained from the revised assessments was Rs. 5,85,000, so that the actual assessments have considerably exceeded the forecast.

8. The Commissioner considers the increase taken large, but not too large if the great increase in cultivation and general prosperity are taken into consideration. The Government of India noted, with reference to the assessments of the Khusbáb talisil, that the average incidence of the assessment was in spite of the rise in prices less per cultivated acre under the new than under the previous settlement, and that the half net assets estimate was framed on an unduly low scale of prices and suggested that

the term of settlement should be ten years. To this the Punjab Government replied, and His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor gave it as his opinion, that there was nothing in the half net assets estimate to lead him to think that the assessment proposed was much below what it ought to be, and he thought that the term of the settlement should be the same as in the rest of the district. The correspondence will be found in Revenue Proceedings Nos. 21 and 22 of August 1893. Finally, the Government of India agreed that the term of settlement for the Khusháb tahsíl should be twenty years. This correspondence practically decides what the term of settlement should be for the whole district. The Financial Commissioner therefore recommends that it be fixed at twenty years from the dates given in para 72 of the report, viz. :—

Tahsíl.					Assessment Circle.				Harvest from which the re-assessment came into force.
Bhera	...	...	...	...	Chenáb	...	...	...	Kharif 1889.
					Bár and Jhelum	...	...	...	Rabi 1891.
Sháhpur	...	...	...	...	Whole tahsíl	...	...	...	Kharif 1892.
Khusháb	...	...	...	...	Plains portion	...	...	...	Rabi 1893.
					Hill	...	...	...	Kharif 1891.

The revision of settlement should commence in 1909 or in 1910 at latest. The Settlement Collector recommends that the next revision of settlement should commence in 1908, but as the settlement of the whole district will not expire till 1912, and Mr. Fryer thinks that the revision should not take more than two years, 1909 will probably be quite soon enough to begin the next revision. A considerable enhancement of revenue is certain to be obtained at the next revision.

9. The Financial Commissioner quite agrees with what the Commissioner Distribution of assess- says in para. 12 of his review about the care which the ment. Settlement Collector bestowed on the distribution of the revenue on holdings. Mr. Wilson's remarks in his para. 54 show how thoroughly this work was done. The mode of assessing lands irrigated by canals, as eventually decided, is to assess all lands irrigated by canals whether owned by the State or by private persons at the same rates as similar unirrigated lands in the circle and then impose an owner's rate, which is called a water advantage rate, of 8 annas an acre to be realised from all land actually irrigated in any given year. On the small canals from the Chenáb river the rate is to be 4 annas an acre only.

10. The Financial Commissioner will not follow Mr. Wilson in his accounts of the manner in which each circle in each tahsíl was Enhancement of revenue as Canal irrigation extends. assessed. The condition mentioned in para. 74 that all land now recorded and assessed as uncultivated shall, if it becomes irrigated by a canal, be liable to pay, in addition to water-rate and water advantage rate, an unirrigated land revenue rate equal to the rate sanctioned for the circle on canal irrigated land in its unirrigated aspect, less any rate that may have been assessed on it as waste land: provided that the resulting assessment shall not be less than Rs. 50 in any one village, is a very useful one, and one which secure to the State a further enhancement of revenue as canal irrigation extends. The question of imposing an increased assessment on lands which pass to new cultivators is, as the Commissioner says, under separate consideration and need not be alluded to here.

11. As the maps of the regular settlement were not drawn to scale and were very inaccurate, and as waste lands were not surveyed at all, it was found necessary to make a complete re-survey of the district on the square system. Records of rights in irrigation for wells, canals and hill streams have been very carefully drawn up. The Settlement Collector recommends that the tax on artizans, which is now levied in 393 out of 667 estates and the *malbah* or tax for village expenses, which is levied by a

percentage on the revenue falling at from 5 per cent. where the revenue does not exceed Rs. 500 to 2 per cent. where the revenue exceeds Rs. 2,000, should be brought under some control. The tax on artisans might, he thinks, be available for sanitary purposes. The octroi tax levied in 86 villages and *jhajhri* or *bakri*, a tax on marriages, should, Mr. Wilson recommends, be abolished. Whether Government should interfere with these village taxes is, the Financial Commissioner considers, open to doubt, and it is almost certain that the action recommended would not be agreeable to the people.

12. Boundary disputes caused serious trouble to the revenue officers during the settlement. The principle laid down by the Settlement Collector for the decision of boundary disputes between village landowners and the lessees of Government waste lands, or between the lessees of Government waste land *inter se*, or between the lessees on village landowners and the State, seem to be equitable and have been duly carried out.

13. The di-alluvion rules, the rules for the remission of revenue on lands submerged by lakes in the Hill circle, the rules regarding the assessment of estates in the Ara circle, and the rules for the assessment of lands irrigated by State canals in the Bhera and Shāhpur tahsils, have all been sanctioned. On private canals from the river Jhelum a royalty of 4 annas per acre, actually irrigated, will be payable by the owners of the canal to Government, and on private canals from the river Chenāb, a royalty of 2 annas per acre, actually irrigated, will be charged. This royalty is payable by the owner of the canal out of his profits whether the land irrigated belongs to him or not. The report on secure and insecure areas has not yet reached the Financial Commissioner. The guide to suspensions of land revenue given in para. 112 of the report seems to be somewhat elaborate, but will, no doubt, be found easy to work when they have been for some time in practice.

14. The system of *ināms* introduced by Mr. Wilson has much to commend it, and it cannot, the Financial Commissioner thinks, be too strongly insisted upon that men who are paid in this way for certain services should be called upon to perform them. There are 75 *ināmdārs* in the Shāhpur District, and they will probably be found to be a most useful body of men. The number of *lambardārs* should be gradually reduced where it is excessive.

15. Mr. Wilson's report on leases of State lands has lately been disposed of by the Financial Commissioner. There is no doubt that some of these grants have been made on terms which were unduly favourable to the lessees, and the Financial Commissioner is in favour of prescribing the rules for the grant of land in the Shāhpur District, which are proposed as a supplement to the ordinary waste land rules. These rules should be observed as rules of practice by the Deputy Commissioner. It must be remembered that in many cases the grants which have proved most valuable to the lessees were made by Government at a time when it was not known what the eventual value of the grants would be, and that at the time the grants were made it was more or less of a speculation whether the lessees would be successful in the canals they undertook to dig.

16. In 1886 the Financial Commissioner estimated that the settlement would be completed in five years and would cost 2½ lakhs of rupees. It actually lasted seven years and cost, deducting certain items not fairly chargeable to the settlement, Rs. 2,72,268. The increase of revenue will repay the cost of the settlement in one-and-a-half years. Mr. Wilson thinks that it would have been better to appoint a separate Settlement Officer, as the settlement would then have been completed sooner and the increased assessment would have been secured earlier. Mr. Fryer is inclined to concur in this opinion on the ground on which it is based by Mr. Wilson, but there are undoubted advantages in combining the appointment of Deputy Commissioner and Settlement Officer in one person, and the result in this particular instance has been entirely satisfactory.

17. Mr. Wilson's settlement of the Sháhpur District seems to the Financial Commissioner to have been deserving of the highest praise. Although charged with the ordinary administration of the district, as well as with the direction of settlement operations, he carried out his work most conscientiously and well; he seems to have thought of everything and to have neglected nothing, and it is quite evident, from the records of his work, that he has done it most thoroughly. The Assistant Settlement Officer, Khan Bahádur Mián Ghulám Faríd, is well known to the Financial Commissioner as a good revenue officer and well merits the commendation bestowed upon him by Mr. Wilson. The services of the other officers mentioned, and especially those of Tahsildárs Lála Ganga Rám and Chaudhri Alla Bakhsh, merit recognition. Colonel Montgomery, the Officiating Commissioner of the Ráwalpindi Division, has written a careful review of the Settlement Collector's final report.

